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SCULPTURED ANTHROPOID APE HEADS

FOUND IN OR NEAR THE VALLEY OF THE JOHN DAY RIVER,
A TRIBUTARY OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER, OREGON,

BY
JAMES TERRY



NEW YORK
1891

THE Columbia valley and its tributaries offers as rich a field to the archæologist as it has revealed to the paleontologist, and it has been my good fortune to secure a large amount of material there, which will serve as a basis for several papers.

The present paper treats especially of three remarkable stone heads from this region, which are here figured and described for the first time.

The plates of these sculptures were made by the artotype process, being photographs in printing ink, executed by the well-known firm of E. Bierstadt of New York city. Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 are natural size, taken by him directly from the objects. Figures 5 and 6 are half natural size, also taken from the object, by an artist in Oregon, and the negative sent to Mr. Bierstadt for reproduction. I have not had the latter specimen before me in preparing the present paper, but I examined it in 1882, when I obtained the specimen represented on Plate I.

I here acknowledge my obligations to the kindness of Professor O. C. Marsh of Yale University, and Professor T. Condon of Oregon, in permitting me to examine and describe their specimens represented in Plates II. and III.

J. T.

SCULPTURED ANTHROPOID APE HEADS,

FROM OREGON.

It is not my intention, in the present brief notice of the remarkable pieces of sculpture here described, to offer any assertions based upon an autochthonous theory as to the origin of man on this continent, or the more generally accepted theory of his migration from the Asiatic continent. The advocates of either hypothesis, in the present state of the science, have but little to substantiate their position. The literature of American anthropology is already so filled with opposing theories that it appalls the student who undertakes to unravel the contradistinctions of its many writers, and hence I shall try to avoid further complication.

I may, however, be permitted to review briefly the theories of some recent writers who advocate a hyperborean origin for primitive man on this continent, more particularly in the region where these sculptures were found. I shall also call attention to some of their statements which appear to be controverted by archæological research; making no claims for my position as final, but bearing in mind the importance which authentic material should always have in determining any conclusion on the subject.

Philologists have long contended that true anthropologic investigation must look to language as a foundation-stone. Cuno maintains that race is not co-extensive with language; Posche, that anthropology and archæology must supplant and correct the conclusions of philology; M. Broca, that physical characteristics command the position in determining the consanguinity of races. With these conflicting positions of men eminent in their attainments, it is with a sense of relief that we turn to these specimens of a past people, which by their immutable character reveal to us some light as to their origin.

Most of our archæological material (material strictly archaic, Pre-columbian) north of Mexico is remotely separated from any philological or physiological connections. Particularly is this the case with the stone sculptures of the Columbia valley, unless it be conceded that the tribes inhabiting that valley at the time of European occupancy were related to these remains. To this last I cannot assent, for these sculptures would then probably have held such a high status in their limited development of progress as to have attracted the attention of Lieutenant Broughton, and Lewis and Clark, and been mentioned by them.

Mr. George Gibbs, in his well-known memoir,* speaks of these Indians as follows: "No division of tribes into clans is observable, nor any organization similar to the eastern tribes, neither have the Indians of this territory emblematical distinction resembling the "totem."

Mr. Stephen Powers, in a paper read before the California Academy of Sciences, † mentions that the present tribes of Indians in California all use implements (such as mortars, pestles, pipes, and stone daggers) of a quality inferior to those used by the aboriginals, and that when one of the present Indians is found using an article of superior manufacture, he will acknowledge that he did not make it, but found it. In my intercourse with the tribes of the Columbia valley, the Yakimas, Warm Spring, Nez Perces, and others, they invariably answered my inquiries regarding the origin of these archaic specimens, and the many other sculptured pieces found in this region, by saying that they had no knowledge or tradition concerning them. The lack of any evidence to connect the tribes of this valley with these sculptures warrants us in considering them as archaic specimens dissociated from any relation with historic tribes.

The specimen represented on Plates I. and II. is one of the results of my researches in the Columbia valley in 1882, and is now in my collection at the American Museum of Natural History, New York city. The specimen represented on Plates III. and IV. was found by Professor O. C. Marsh, is now in the collection of Yale University, and was the first one of these sculptures brought to light. Professor Marsh, in his address on Vertebrate Life in America, delivered before the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at Nashville.

* "Contributions to American Ethnology," Vol. I., p. 184. 1877.

† "Proceedings California Academy of Sciences," Vol. V., p. 392. 1875.

Tennessee, August 30, 1877, makes the following reference to this sculpture, and some other similar specimens :

“It is far from my intention to add to the many theories extant in regard to the early civilizations in this country, and their connections with the primitive inhabitants or the later Indians, but two or three facts have recently come to my knowledge which I think worth mentioning in this connection. On the Columbia River I have found evidence of the former existence of inhabitants much superior to the Indians at present there, and of which no tradition remains. Among many stone carvings which I saw there were a number of heads which so strongly resembled those of apes that the likeness at once suggests itself. Whence came these sculptures, and by whom were they made?”

The specimen represented on Plate V. is in the collection of Professor Thomas Condon of Oregon.

These three specimens were found in or near the valley of the John Day River, a tributary of the Columbia. They would be classed by archæologists as “surface finds,” a classification that would cover a large proportion of the archaic remains of the valley, from the fact that the shifting sand dunes, which were largely utilized for burial purposes, are continually bringing them to the surface and exposing them. Each specimen is clearly a complete object in itself, never having formed a part of any larger sculpture from which it might have been detached or broken. They were carved from a dark, pumiceous, basaltic rock, abundance of which is found in the valley.

The specimen on Plates I. and II. is made from an open porous boulder of basalt, the structure of which is very effectively brought out by the print. The exterior has been entirely worked with the exception of about one-half of the surface of the left side, and the top of the second, third, and fourth corrugations, all of which exhibit the natural surface of the rock. The broad, flat nose, with supporting cheeks, and the contractions or corrugations of the forehead, are characteristics of the ape family which will attract the attention of specialists in this branch of zoölogy, a branch with which the writer lays no claim to familiarity. The mouth and chin of this specimen are clearly represented in Plate II.

In Professor Marsh's specimen, shown on Plates III. and IV., the nose is represented by two round protuberances similar to the eyes, but smaller and closer together. The mouth is distended, exhibiting the

teeth, of which there are eleven. The corrugations of the forehead are intensified and project forward, as represented by Plate IV., both of which features would seem to indicate anger. This specimen is made from a close, compact boulder of basalt, which exhibits the natural surface except in the sculptured parts.

Plate V. represents Mr. Condon's specimen, half natural size. His conclusions regarding the sculpture are contained in his letter, which is printed in the foot-note below.* The "front view" referred to was so disproportionate that I asked for another negative giving a face view on the line of centre of the object, which is the one now represented in the plate. The "small, mortar-like cavities" mentioned are fully shown in the profile view. To Mr. Condon's hypothesis of its use, drawn from the little cup-like mortars, I must beg to take exception, for it cannot be shown that the Indians have any knowledge of these sculptures; in fact, as previously stated, the contrary is known. Regarding its being the copy of some figurehead of a Malay proa, it must be borne in mind that there are three or more of these sculptures known, each with a distinctive character, and all of them found east of the Cascade Mountains, a distance of two hundred miles from the coast, and with several intervening tribes who have failed to preserve any features of a proa or junk figure among their carvings, notwithstanding the fact that over one hundred of these derelicts of the sea have been cast on our northwest coast.

Dr. W. H. Dall, whose scholarly attainments in ethnology are entitled to respect, remarks, in his admirable paper † on the "Tribes of the Extreme North West," that he sees "no reason for disputing the

"November 15, 1890.

* "MR. JAMES TERRY,

Dear Sir:—I have just filled my promise of a week ago by consigning to the care of Wells, Fargo & Co.'s Express those two negatives you asked for. I am afraid I have taken a little too much liberty, though, in a slight departure from your instructions in regard to the front view. If you would prefer it perfectly level and will write me at once I will have it taken level. I asked the artist to tilt it forward a little so as to show the small, mortar-like cavities of the summit. Many minute mortars are found in Oregon with cavities like these, and I once asked an old Indian what they made of them. His answer was ". . . We make medicines (in those) for sick eyes." Starting from this suggestion I thought it probable that this head was owned by an Indian doctor; and he used the sacredness he attached, and perhaps his patients attached, to this head as adding to the efficacy of his treatment. In regard to the gorilla likeness and the inquiry where the Indians got it, I would say: I have drifted into the conviction that some Malay proa with a wooden figurehead like this may have been wrecked on our coast. The Indians would think it a Godsend and give this permanent form in stone. If you would like any modification, write me.

"Truly yours,

"THOMAS CONDON."

† "Contributions to American Ethnology," Vol. I., p. 95. 1877.

“hypothesis that America was peopled from Asia originally, and that “there were successive waves of emigration ;” thus casting doubt upon a southwestern immigration. In his last chapter to Nadaillac’s “Pre-historic America,” p. 523, he modifies his former view as follows: “Probably the American races entered by both gates.”

Dr. Daniel Wilson* maintains that, “From some one of the early “centres of South American population, planted on the Pacific coasts by “Polynesian or other migration, and nursed in the neighboring valleys “of the Andes in remote prehistoric times, the predominant southern “race diffused itself, or extended its influence through many ramifica- “tions. It spread northward beyond the Isthmus, expanded throughout “the peninsular region of Central America, and after occupying for a “time the Mexican plateau, it overflowed along either side of the great “mountain chain, reaching towards the northern latitudes of the Pacific, “and extending inland to the east of the Rocky Mountains through the “great valley watered by the Mississippi and its tributaries. It must “not, however, be supposed that such a hypothesis of migration im- “plies the literal diffusion of a single people from one geographical “centre. There is as little reason for designating either the Toltecs “or the Mound-Builders, Peruvians, as for calling the Iranian Indo-Ger- “mans, Greeks. But many archæological traces seem to indicate just “such affinities between the former as have been suggested by the philo- “logical relations of the latter.”

Since Dr. Wilson announced this hypothesis, evidence has accumu- lated, from exploration of mounds in the Mississippi valley and among the ruined pueblos of the southwestern Territories, to strengthen a theory of migration northward from the tropical centres of population.

The late Lewis H. Morgan claimed the Columbia valley as the nursery of man on the American continent,† basing his conclusions almost wholly on linguistic grounds, and the enormous quantity of fish which the Columbia River afforded to sustain life. He makes no refer- ence to archæological remains in that valley, from the fact that no work in that direction had been prosecuted there at the time of his writing. Starting with the fact that more numerous dialects of different stock languages existed there than in any other equal area on the continent, and that a bountiful fish subsistence was to be had with little exertion,

* “Prehistoric Races,” Vol. II., p. 347. 1876.

† “Indian Migrations.” *North American Review*, October, 1868, and January, 1870.

Mr. Morgan claimed that an increase of numbers was favored, which forced out the surplus population into lines of migration still going on at the time of European occupancy.

He claims, first, that the mountain chains suggested and *afforded* the main line of migration. This would certainly imply a subsistence by the chase, an entirely new and different mode of sustenance from that of fishing; besides, the mountains are heavily timbered and extremely difficult to travel and hunt game in. He has overlooked the parallelism of the four rivers, the Cowlitz, Willamette, Sacramento, and San Joaquin, whose waters nearly connect, from Puget Sound to the Gulf of California, and thus favored a manner of life to which the natives were already accustomed, and which might have served as a line of migration in either direction.

His secondary lines of migration are the rivers, giving as the most probable route the Saskatchewan first, the Arkansas second, and the Platte third. He afterwards changes this and gives the Platte first and Saskatchewan second, and states that an overflow from the Columbia would reach Patagonia sooner than Florida, ignoring the fact that the headwaters of the Columbia and the Missouri are only separated a few miles by the high divide of the continent, from the summit of which both valleys are visible. He classes the route by the Missouri and the Platte as belonging to the central prairie region, where the buffalo abounded by tens of thousands, and which was the nursery of the elk and antelope; but claims that without the horse the Indian hunter was powerless to provide for his wants.

At the date of Mr. Morgan's writing the buffalo existed in such enormous numbers that a stampede of a herd over a bluff or precipice would secure hundreds of them. Father Hennepin, in his travels in 1679, mentions that a tribe surrounded a herd of buffalo, and then setting fire to the grass and lying in ambush, slaughtered them by the thousand. There can be no question that the Indian and his progenitors were capable, without the horse, of securing buffalo sufficient for their mode of life, and an abundance to promote a line of migration eastward by the Missouri route, if there was an overflow from the Columbia in that direction.

The main force of Mr. Morgan's reasoning lies in the fact, that so many spoken dialects of several different stock languages existed in the Columbia valley when discovered by the present white race, assuming of

course that they must have originated there. To quote his exact words: "The several stocks belonging to the Ganowanian family who "were found in the possession of the land are to be regarded as the "descendants and representatives of an original stock, which 'flowed out "in successive streams from some original centre. The remoteness in "the past of their first establishment must be estimated by the time "required to create the present diversity of speech both in dialects and "stock languages."

The condition of the human race is one of progression, and that progression is exemplified by a development of the arts and of a social status in a degree commensurate with the parent language and dialect; the one being a natural accompaniment of the other, and both of them the results of a long period of time. The "great antiquity" which Mr. Morgan claims for the development of the different dialects proceeding from that "original centre," the Columbia valley, should have carried with it those other accessories which accompany the progress and development of the human race, characterized by the arts and civil advancement, as well as language.

No mention is made by Lieutenant Broughton, who entered this river in 1792, or by Lewis and Clark, of any confederacy existing among the tribes at the dates of their visits. Each tribe appeared to be governed within itself, and carried on a trade or barter extending from the Chinook at the mouth of the Columbia, to the Chopunnish of the Rocky Mountains. All of the extinct village sites which I have visited, and which correspond nearly with all the village sites mentioned by Lewis and Clark, as well as many others not referred to by them, bear no evidence of a great antiquity. No remains of any fortifications, houses, or structures are to be found. Many of the stone and bone implements are of a similar character to those of California. The stone pipes, of which there have been only two or three found, are identical with those of California, although Lewis and Clark mention pipes of hard wood. The sculptures evince a higher degree of art-advancement and belong possibly to a different epoch.

The prolific resources of the Columbia River in the salmon season are of such vital importance to nomadic tribes, that its reputation would rapidly extend up and down the coast and eastward, as I have before mentioned, and bring many different-speaking tribes together on this common ground, which has remained neutral to this day.

The United States Bureau of Ethnology, through some of its writers, advocates a northern origin for that extensive population of the Mississippi valley and its tributaries, commonly called the Mound Builders. Mr. Holmes, in his article on "Ancient Pottery of the Mississippi Valley,"* makes the following statement: "Taken as a whole the remains of the Mound Builders would seem to point to a hyperborean origin for both the people and their arts." This is followed by descriptions and illustrations of ceramic forms, which point strongly to a southern influence and affiliation allied to that of Mexico and Peru. The conch and clam-shell forms of pottery described are represented by species the nearest of which geographically are in the Gulf of Mexico. These forms of pottery are found in the mounds along that great highway of migration, the Mississippi River, and from this "focal centre," as he regards it, south to the Gulf of Mexico. These forms disappear altogether north of the Missouri River, *and all evidences of the fictile art disappear entirely to the westward of the mouth of the Yellowstone River.* This fact, taken in connection with the absence of any pottery sherds from the Gulf of California to the Behring Sea along the Pacific coast, has an important bearing as to the ethnic relations of these two areas. The water-jars and head-shaped vases described and illustrated in this article by Mr. Holmes, and of which my own collection contains a still larger and more comprehensive series, exhibit such a marked similarity to those of Mexico and Peru, that the conclusion is irresistible that the art, customs, and culture of these countries, shown by this archæological evidence, extended to and covered a large portion of the Mississippi valley. There has been as yet nothing obtained from the mounds to sustain a theory of hyperborean origin for the arts they contain.

This same writer, in his article on "Art in Shell of the Ancient Americans,"† speaking of an engraved gorget ‡ from a mound in south-

* "Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology," p. 375. 1882.

† "Second Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology," p. 305. 1880.

‡ The facts regarding this gorget are as follows: It was found in a mound near Charleston, Missouri, in 1877, in connection with pottery now in my collection, by a Mr. Lane, who had been opening mounds in that vicinity, and whom I afterwards employed in my work in that locality. I purchased it, together with his other mound material, and received an order from Mr. Lane on Colonel A. L. Whitly, to whom he had loaned the gorget, to deliver it to me. Upon my presenting the order to Colonel Whitly, he informed me he had in turn loaned it to Professor Potter of Washington University, where it has since remained. This statement is made to show its authenticity, and to bring out the fact that this gorget was found associated with mound pottery, and in such connection as to show that it was contemporaneous with the pottery, and that it did not belong to an "age of shell" distinctively, as Mr. Holmes has classed it.—J. T.

eastern Missouri, is "forced to the conclusion that it must be the off-spring of the same beliefs and customs and the same culture as the "art of Mexico." It is difficult to understand upon what grounds he refers all the articles of shell enumerated and illustrated in his paper to "an "age of shell supplementing the age of stone." A large proportion of the specimens described were found in mounds and graves, associated with articles of stone and pottery in such juxtaposition as to leave no doubt of their belonging to and being made by the same people that fashioned the implements of stone and vessels of clay.

On the Pacific coast, there have been opened under my direction and supervision upwards of seven thousand tombs, and I have in my collection probably the largest amount of material known, pertaining to the coast races between the Gulf of California and Puget Sound. All the shell, stone, and bone specimens of the California coast are found so intimately associated as to leave no doubt of their common origin. Beads of serpentine and bone are found *inlaid* with beads of shell; stone mortars and serpentine bowls are inlaid and ornamented with the brilliant *haliotis* and other shell ornaments, and the same applies to pestles, spindlewhorls, and other articles. So far as any evidence furnished by the Wheeler Survey Report or my own investigations on the Pacific coast have revealed, man's ability to master stone, bone, and shell was here co-equal and contemporaneous, and not, as Mr. Holmes asserts,* "after a certain mastery over materials had been "achieved."

The influence of Polynesian life, with its customs and usages, in the Columbia valley and along the coast below, is exemplified by a similarity of stone implements, which reflects much more than a mere incident in the life of a semi-barbarous race, even though placed under a similar environment. The *mere-mere* stone weapon of the Maori chiefs of New Zealand, made of the beautiful nephrite, represents an emblem of rank of the most eminent degree, and is the most highly valued of their possessions. Examples of this implement made of green serpentine are found in the Columbia, Willamette, Rogue, and Klamath river valleys. The club head-stones of New Britain and New Guinea are known in large numbers from the California graves, and a few are found up to and including the Columbia valley.

* Second Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, p. 187. 1883.

The finding of nephrite boulders in the river gravels of the north-west coast * has relieved the necessity of ascribing the few implements made of this material, and found in Central America, Mexico, and the Columbia and Frazer river valleys, † to Asiatic origin, or a migration even from the cliff in Alaska, described by F. W. Clark. ‡

The "color of spring," which has been applied to jadeite and nephrite stones, seemingly has some inherent virtue in the eyes of barbaric and semi-civilized races. The calchahuitls of the Aztecs, the jadeites of the Chinese and Lake dwellers, the nephrite of Polynesia, and the serpentine of California have all stimulated the highest skill and a vast amount of patient labor, when used by these races for their most cherished objects.

The evidences of recent geological changes in the Columbia valley, as shown in the submerged forest mentioned by Lewis and Clark, § and also by Dr. J. S. Newberry, || are, for obvious reasons, of a comparatively modern date, and may have had an important influence upon the people dwelling near this river. The Indians have a tradition, that at one time a great natural bridge spanned the river at the Cascades, which, having fallen, dammed the river and caused the present rapids. There are also evidences that certain localities of the lower Columbia must have met with great changes, although I find no mention made of it by geologists or the early travellers. Indications point to a large community existing upon Sauvies Island, at the junction of the Willamette and Columbia rivers, a place which at the present day has two inundations every year, rendering it uninhabitable over six months of the time. It would hardly have been selected as a village site under these circumstances. A systematic geological survey of this valley is necessary for determining any data as to these changes, and their probable influence upon the native races.

Professor Whitney, in his "Auriferous Gravels of the Sierra Nevada," p. 288, reaches the following conclusion: "That there is a large body of evidence, the strength of which it is impossible to deny, which seems to prove that man existed in California previous to the cessation of

* G. M. Dawson, "Canadian Record of Science," Vol. II., No. 6, p. 364, 1887; J. Terry, "Science," p. 16. January, 1890.

† I am unaware of a single specimen of this material having been found in California.

‡ "Proceedings of United States National Museum," Vol. XI. 1883.

§ "Lewis and Clark" (edition 1814), Vol. II., p. 241.

|| "Pacific Railway Survey," Vol. VI., pp. 43-56. 1857.

“volcanic activity in the Sierra Nevada, to the epoch of the greatest extension of the glaciers in that region, and to the erosion of the present river cañons and valleys, at a time when the animal and vegetable creation differed entirely from what they now are, and when the topographical features of the state were extremely unlike those exhibited by the present surface.”

It is not improbable that the conditions described by Professor Whitney extended to the present valley of the Columbia, the fauna of which may then have contained the species from which these sculptured heads were copied.

In reaching a conclusion in regard to the origin of the stone heads here described, it would appear, from our present knowledge, either that the animals which these carvings represent once existed in the Columbia valley, or that, in the remote past, a migration of natives from some region containing these monkeys reached this valley, and left one of the vivid impressions of their former surroundings in these imperishable sculptures.

EXPLANATION OF PLATES.

PLATE I. Ape Head carved in basalt, front view, natural size ; from the valley of the John Day River, Oregon. James Terry collection.

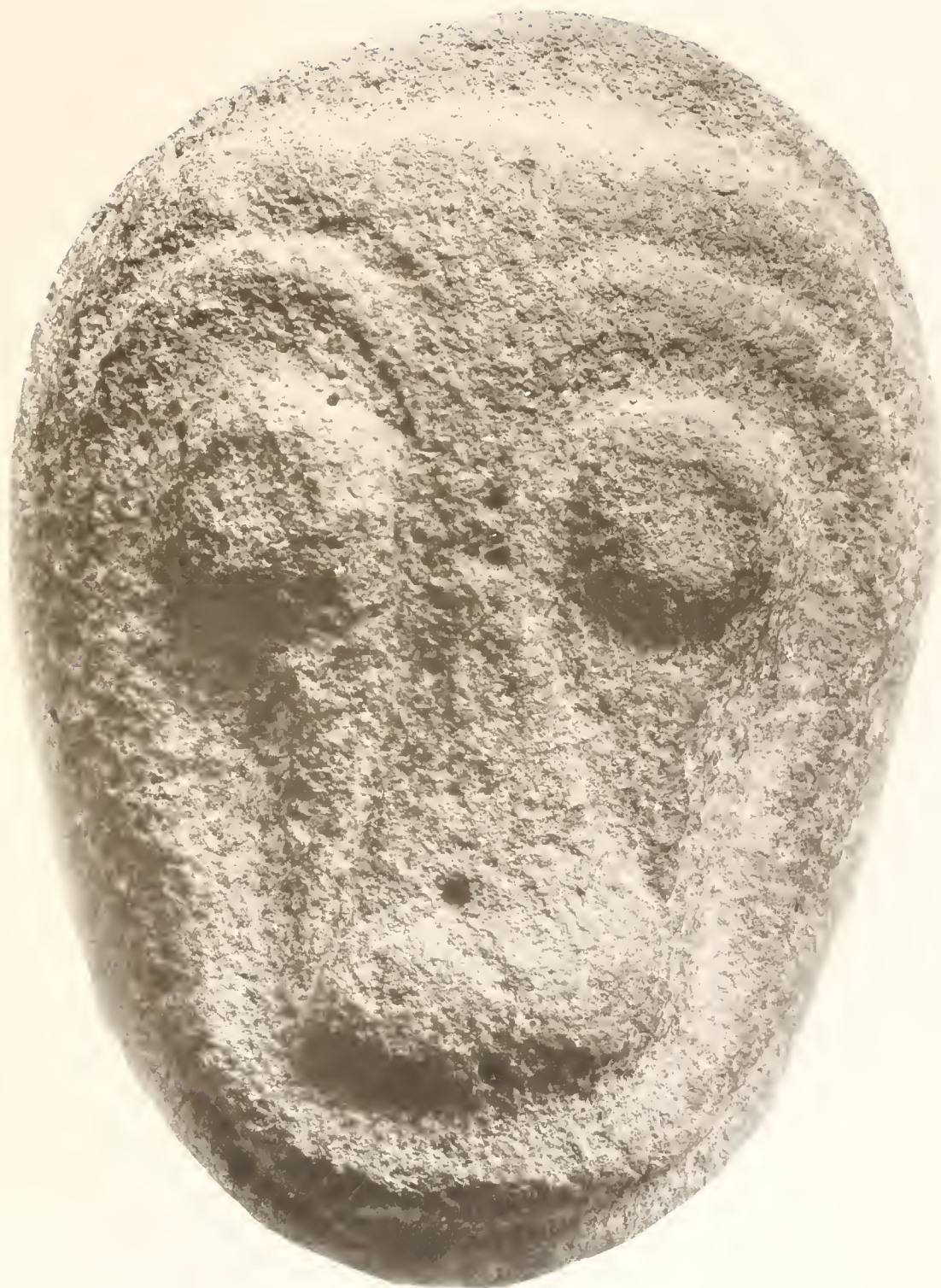
PLATE II. Side view of same head.

PLATE III. Ape Head carved in basalt, front view, natural size ; from the valley of the John Day River, Oregon. Professor O. C. Marsh collection.

PLATE IV. Side view of same head.

PLATE V. Ape Head carved in basalt, front and side view, about half natural size ; from the valley of the Des Chutes River, Oregon. Thomas Condon collection.

PLATE I.



FRONT VIEW. NATURAL SIZE.

SCULPTURED STONE HEAD. OREGON

COLLECTION OF JAMES TERRY.

PLATE II.

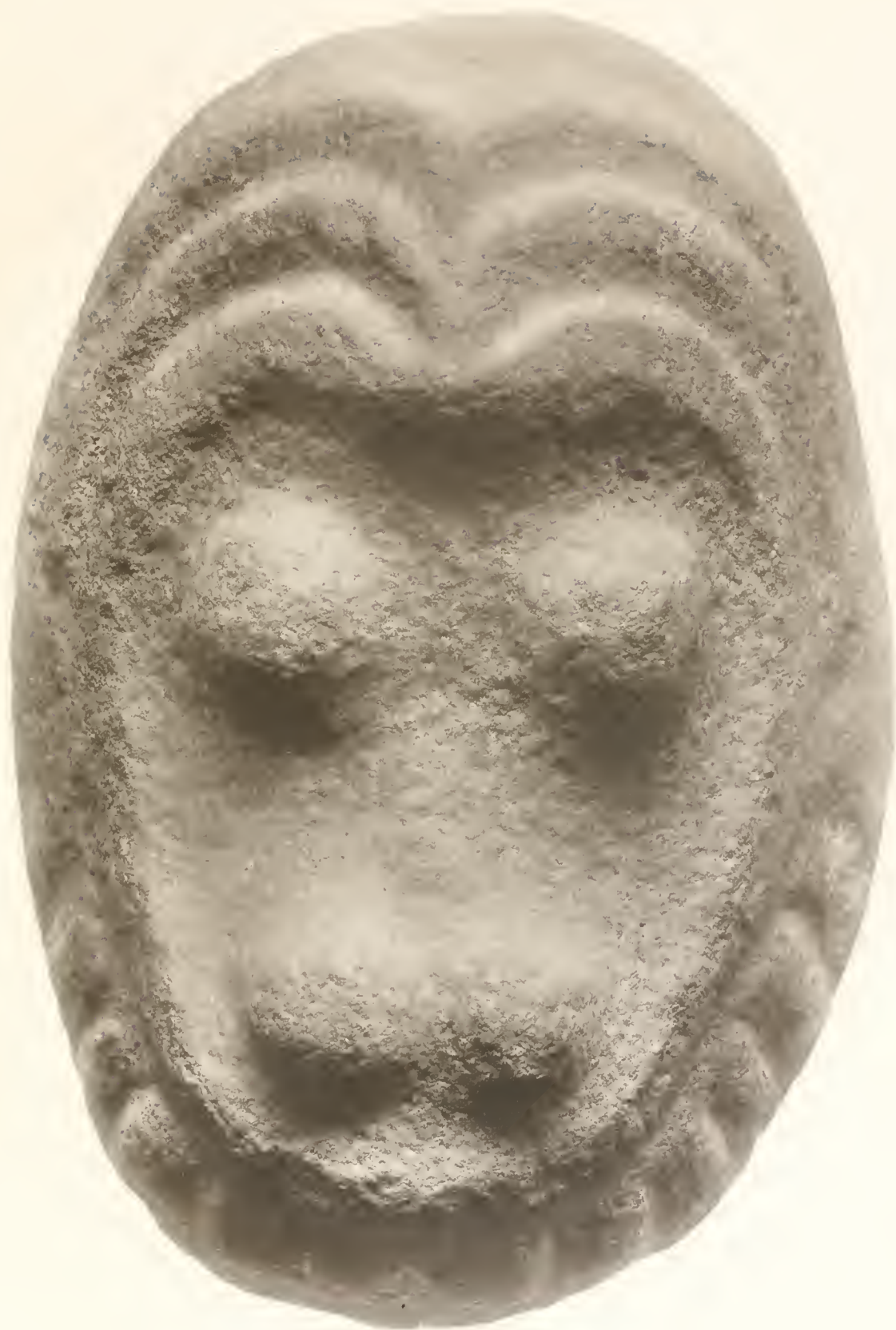


SIDE VIEW OF HEAD

SCULPTURED STONE HEAD OREGON

COLLECTION OF JAMES W. WELLS

PLATE III.



FRONT VIEW. NATURAL SIZE

SCULPTURED STONE HEAD. OREGON

COLLECTION OF PROF. G. C. MARSH.

PLATE IV

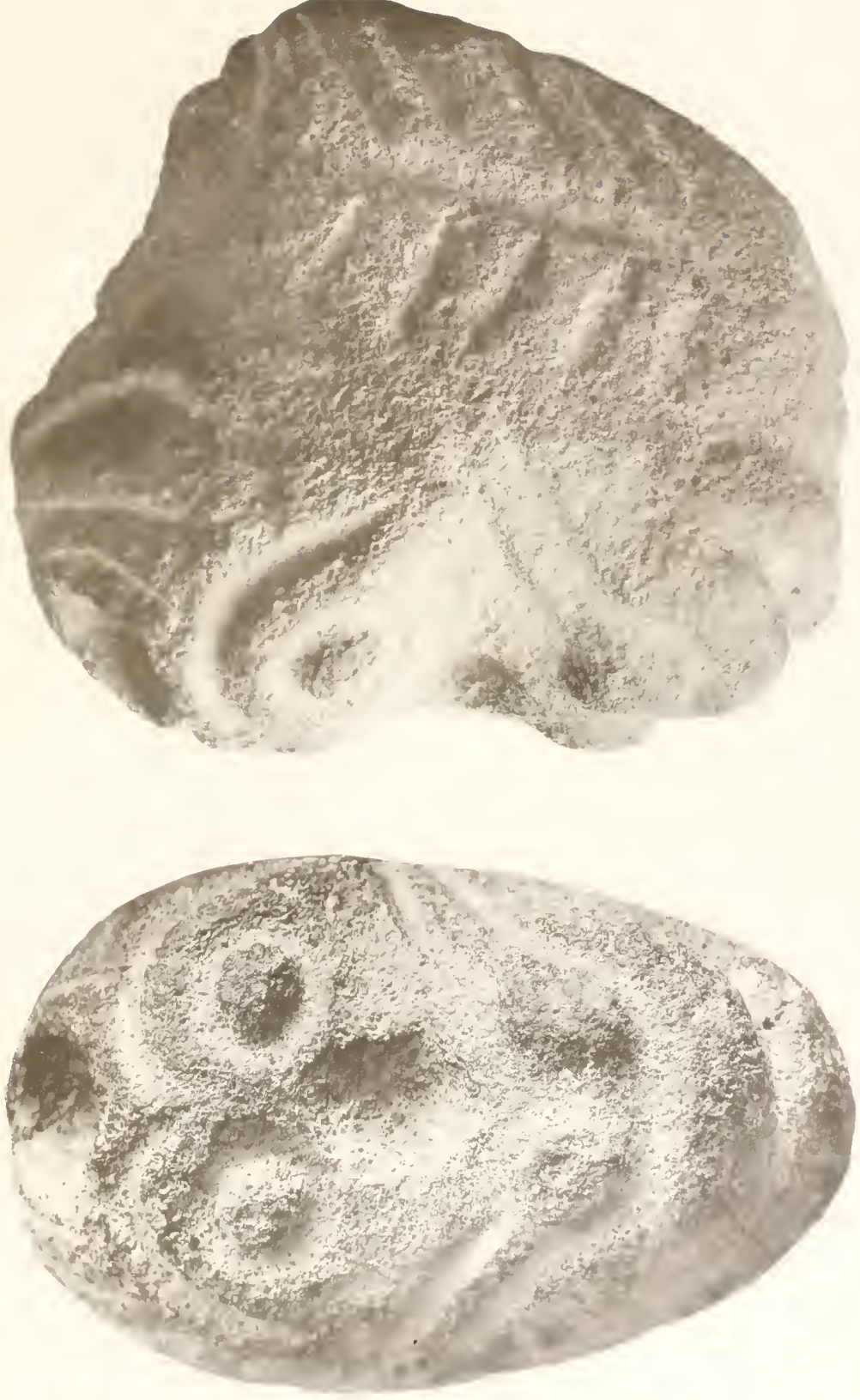


MUSEUM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

SCULPTURED STONE HEAD - OPIGAWY

COLLECTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PLATE V.



FRONT AND SIDE VIEW. 1/2 NATURAL SIZE

SCULPTURED STONE HEAD. OREGON.



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